

Worksheet

The story so far

Katie has decided to leave her boring job and boring life in England and go to California to visit her cousin Sal. She has broken up with her English boyfriend Mark but he came to the airport to say goodbye to her. Katie gets on the plane.



Listening

1. Katie meets a stranger on the plane. What do they talk about? Listen and tick the topics that are mentioned.

1. Living in England

2. Visiting Los Angeles

3. Plane food

4. The weather

5. A poem

2. Listen again to each conversation and decide if the sentences are true or false.

- Katie is feeling happy.
 The man asks Katie to move so he can sit down.
- Katie hasn't been to Los Angeles before.
 The man says she won't like it.
- The man is from the United States.
 He was in England for a poetry festival.
- The man doesn't like poetry.
 He gives Katie a poetry book.

Language: Making small talk

3. Look at the different ways that Katie and Michael make small talk on the plane. Can you remember what they said exactly?

- They talked about where the plane was going. What did Michael ask Katie?
- They talked about the food. What did Michael say?
- They talked about where they are from. What did Katie ask?
- They introduced themselves near the end. What did they say?

Worksheet

4. Work in pairs. Imagine you are sitting next to each other on a plane. You don't know each other. Take turns making small talk. Use the expressions from exercise three to help you.



Speaking

- 1 Have you ever been on an plane? Where did you go?
- 2 What are some other situations when people make small talk?
- 3 The poem Michael talks about is called *The Road Not Taken*, by American poet Robert Frost. What do you think the poet means?

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost (1874-1963)

Transcript

(MM = Michael Mensah)

KATIE: This is silly.

MM: Excuse me.

KATIE: Yes?

MM: I'm in the seat next to you. Can I just...?

KATIE: Of course. Sorry.

MM: Is it your first visit to Los Angeles?

KATIE: What? Me? Oh. Yes. Yes it is.

MM: You'll like it.

KATIE: Yeah. Well. Thanks.

MM: Ah, airplane food. It's better now than in the past.

KATIE: Would you like my dessert? I'm not very hungry.

MM: Thanks!

KATIE: Are you from the US?

MM: No, I'm originally from Ghana. But I've lived in LA for a long time.

KATIE: Oh. Why were you in England?

MM: For a poetry festival.

KATIE: Poetry? That's interesting. Do you write poetry?

MM: A little. Why are you going to the States?

KATIE: To change my life.

MM: Sounds exciting.

KATIE: I don't know. I'm a bit nervous.

MM: 'I took the road less traveled by, And that has made all the difference.'

KATIE: What?

MM: It's from a poem, by Robert Frost. It's about making decisions. And travelling.

KATIE: Oh. Thanks.

MM: My name's Michael Mensah by the way.

KATIE: I'm Katie.

MM: Nice to meet you Katie.

KATIE: Yes. Yes, nice to meet you.

MM: Hey, look. I've got a book of Robert Frost's poetry here, if you want to read the whole poem.

KATIE: Thanks.

MM: No problem, it helps pass the time.



Answers

Listening

1. The topics mentioned are 2, 3 and 5.

2. 1. F
T

2. T
F

3. F
T

4. F
T



Language: Making small talk

3. 1. Is it your first visit to Los Angeles?
2. Ah, airplane food. It's better now than in the past.
3. Are you from the US?
4. My name's Michael Mensah, by the way.